



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF NEW MARLBOROUGH
OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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**Tara B. White, Chair
Michele Shalaby
Nathaniel H. Yohalem
Board of Selectmen**

**Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, November 3, 2014**

Board Members Present: Tara B. White, Chairman
Michele Shalaby
Nat Yohalem

Others Present: Michael Skorput, Administrative Assistant
Sharon Fleck, Administrative Secretary
Graham Frank
Prudence Spaulding
Dave Herrick
Burt Imburman
John Pshenishy
Mark Carson
John Srieber
Ned Odegaard
Bill Hattendorf
John Hotaling
Barbara Lowman

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen convened at 5:06 p.m.

The Board read the minutes. **After a discussion, a motion was made and seconded and so voted by all members to approve the minutes of the October 20 as amended and October 27, 2014 Selectmen's meetings.**

Police Contract – The Police contract was discussed and the following changes were made:

1. Effective November 1, 2014, Police Chief, Graham Frank's salary was increased to \$55,000 per year.

2. If terminated as Police Chief prior to June 30, 2015, with or without 45 days' notice, his salary will become \$48,000 per year as a Police Officer in accordance with Town Policy.
3. The Police Chief will receive three weeks' vacation per year.
4. The "sick day" Town policy was clarified as follows: An employee will be paid for the first three days of absence. After three days, a doctor's note is required, however, sick pay not to exceed fifteen days.
5. Graham Frank would like to add to the contract that he shall receive a salary increase when he completes his Associates Degree.

Police Chief Frank also discussed the shortage of part-time police officers and recommended to the Board that an additional officer be hired. The Board acknowledged his request, asked him to interview qualified applicants and make his recommendation to the Board.

Police Chief, Graham Frank, considered the cruiser available from Sheffield. The cruiser has 180,000 miles on it and needs power steering and brakes. The cost to repair the cruiser, plus signage, would be approximately \$1,000. After careful consideration, it was decided to get a new cruiser in FY17 and not consider the cruiser from Sheffield.

Administrative Assistant Position - An ad will be place in "The Record," "Shopper's Guide," and "The Eagle."

Tom Brazie's Cows - Prudence Spaulding advised that she and John Springstube spoke to Tom and Andy Brazie regarding the importance of keeping their animals off the road. Tom understood the Town's concern and voiced his apprehension of the speed of vehicles on Rt.183.

Colonial Power – Mark Cappadona will address the Town's questions regarding electrical power on Monday, November 10, 2014.

School Meeting of October 30, 2014 Update – The Committee voted to keep the three smaller schools open. The Towns of New Marlborough and Alford have sent a letter to the SBRSD requesting this issue be further explored; Sheffield will also send a letter requesting that the Board not make that a final decision. Selectman Yohalem expressed his feelings that the money saved by closing the schools would be better spent on improving education for the students. The SBRSD will request the approval of a \$3.7 million bond, of which New Marlborough's share for repairing the roof and replacing the boilers at the Sheffield school is approximately \$840,000. However, if the district wishes to secure financing from the School Building Authority, that cost is increased to \$6 million in order to meet their requirements of additional insulation in ceiling materials and specific boilers would have to be used. The School Building Authority then would only pay 39.5% of the total cost. The Chairman then suggested that a letter be written requesting that estimates for the repairs and estimated fuel savings, be given without the participation of the School Authority. Selectman Shalaby stated the current cost to heat the building is approximately \$200,000 per year; however, there would only be an estimated 10% savings with "biomass" insulation in the ceiling.

Animal Control – There was a discussion as to who should pick up potentially rabid animals, the citizen or Animal Control. A call will be made to John Springstube to insure that he will pick up rabid animals.

Wired West – Selectman Shalaby reported that the cost to New Marlborough for wiring the Town would be between \$1.7 - \$2.5 million.

Capital Planning Committee – With the Finance Committee present, a discussion ensued regarding taxes vs. spending. Much of the information the Committee derived was from the Department of Revenue, Annual Town Report, the Treasurer, Accountant, Administrative Assistant as well as from Department Heads. Selectman Shalaby stated that one of the goals of the Committee was to develop a plan of what the Town may need/require in the future so that plans and finances can be appropriated. She reported that the majority of the Town's revenue comes from taxes. While the tax rate in New Marlborough has remained steady, the spending has increased steadily. The areas in Town that require that greatest amount of dollars are education and public works. Michele then reported that although revenue has increased 92% in the years of FY2000-FY2013, spending has increased 142.7%. The average increase of a family's tax bill for those years was 5.9%. The Town's operating budget (education and debt service excluded) during the same time period went from 2.7% to 4.4%. Looking forward and looking at the same rate of spending vs. revenue, by the year 2035, there will be a \$5.8 million revenue gap. If the Town abides by restricted revenue and spending, the gap widens to \$10.4 million for the same time period. The conclusion of the Committee was that the tax rate and spending levels were not sustainable.

Selectman Shalaby and the Committee then gave some short-term recommendations, i.e. present the Town with the Committee's findings, budget limitations in FY16, propose no capital purchases during FY16, maintain all reserves in FY16, develop a strategy for use of reserves in FY17.

Long-term recommendations included comparing projections with forecasts FY14 vs. FY15, readjusting the forecast, applying excesses to capital projects, and planning for excesses beginning in FY19, setting a minimum portion of the Town budget that will go to capital expenses, and capital expenses should be equal or less than 10%. Long-term recommendations also included adopting a formal financial policy, improving financial reporting, controlling the total budget, and developing strategic operating plans for the Town's largest departments.

Selectman Yohalem then told of Shared Services that he is working with in neighboring towns to share services, highway materials, etc. as a way to help each town save money.

Being that there was no further business to be brought before the Board, a motion was made, seconded and so voted by all members to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Fleck
Administrative Secretary